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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
AN ACT PROVIDING QUALITY CARE, FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT  
AND NURSING HOME FUNDING REFORM**

**RAISED BILL NO. 6668**

**MARCH 17, 2009**

Ladies and gentlemen of the Human Services Committee, my name is Cathy Ludlum, and I am here to express my strong opposition to Section 2 of Raised Bill No. 6668. This section would create a Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council.

I have over 20 years of experience as an employer of personal care attendants, the last few years funding them through the Personal Care Assistance Waiver. These caring and dedicated people support me in doing such basic things as getting up in the morning, getting dressed and into my wheelchair. They help me do *everything* I do throughout the day. Personal care attendants make it possible for me to live in my own home, go to work, travel, and participate in my community and in society.

No one is more aware than I of the challenges involved in hiring and managing PCAs. It is not an easy task.

But here are some things I also know:

1. Don't fix something that isn't broken! Connecticut's waiver programs allow many people with disabilities to live with autonomy while saving the public money over institutional care. Tampering with the structure of the waivers and driving costs up will not only endanger the independence of many, including myself, but will also result in the loss of jobs for personal care attendants.
2. The recruitment, hiring, and management of personal care attendants needs to be done individually. No centralized Council in Hartford made up of politically appointed volunteers will be able to address the complex issues facing employers and PCAs in their own homes and communities.
3. At a time when Connecticut is in the most severe fiscal crisis it has ever seen, should we be talking about creating a new Council?

4. Certainly there are issues with the current PCA system, but creating a Council to take over management functions will not solve them. One of the chief obstacles to expanding the workforce is people's perception that only licensed medical professionals can work with people with disabilities. Creating a Council and later a union will only exacerbate this problem.
5. Many people with disabilities oppose the development of the Council, and so do our personal care attendants. (Attached to my testimony, you will find the names of five PCAs who also oppose this bill. Three others have handed in testimony today)
6. The only group strongly supporting the creation of a Council is SEIU 1199. We all need to ask ourselves *cui bono* (Who benefits?). If employers lose and personal assistants lose, the only one who wins is the union by increasing its dues and its membership.

I urge you to see Raised Bill 6668 for what it is, and to vote against it.

Thank you for your time.

We, the undersigned personal care attendants, are OPPOSED TO RAISED BILL 6668, An Act Providing Quality Care, Financial Oversight and Nursing Home Funding Reform. This bill would create a Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council as a first step toward unionizing personal care attendants. We do not think this would be in our best interest, or in the best interest of our employers with severe disabilities.

#	Signature	Name (printed)	Address
1	<i>Valerie Santy</i>	Maria Sanhueza	123 Forest Street East Hartford, CT 06118
2	<i>Lilia M. Salas</i>	Lilia M. Salas	17 Prospect St. Williamsville, CT 06226
3	<i>Susan M. Kittredge</i>	Susan M. Kittredge	22 Whiton Street Windsor Locks CT 06096
4	<i>Quetta McConnell</i>	Quetta McConnell	32 Aborn Rd Ellington, CT 06029
5	<i>Valerie</i>	Valerie Boster	118 PARK ST B2 Manchester CT 06106
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**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS  
OPPOSE RAISED BILL 6668  
WHICH WOULD CREATE THE PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT  
QUALITY HOME CARE WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

**HERE'S WHY:**

This Council is being promoted as the answer for people with disabilities who hire personal care attendants to assist them with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, and eating.

Yes, employers do struggle with low wages, no benefits for their attendants, high turnover, and finding backup and respite workers.

**The Council will not solve these problems. In fact, it will make them worse.**

Take the issues of low wages and benefits. Waivers have caps, so the only way to change the situation will be to lower the number of hours allotted to each employer. This will push employers with high-end needs over the cap and into institutions. It will also force employers to reduce the hours they can offer their PCAs.

Turnover is reduced and backup supports provided when an employer has trusting relationships with a group of personal assistants. The Council will erode this trust by introducing extra players and unnecessary regulations into the mix.

**The Council disempowers people with disabilities and personal care attendants.**

The Council claims it will increase the number of personal care attendants through recruitment efforts. People with disabilities have been recruiting their own attendants successfully for decades. It is doubtful that creating a State-run employment agency will have as good an outcome. Furthermore, who will staff this agency, and how will the State pay for it?

The Council will usurp training for personal care attendants, interfering with employers' ability to train their own staff and imposing burdensome certification requirements upon PCAs.

The Council promises to provide personal care attendants for backup and emergency situations. Who will select the workers? Who will pay them, since Medicaid will not fund a worker who has not been preapproved by the employer and the fiscal intermediary? And who will be available to dispatch the workers 24/7?

There is no representation from personal care attendants on the Council. When asked, most PCAs say that they are strongly opposed to such a Council, which they perceive as interfering with their relationships with their employers.

**Issues do need to be addressed, but the Council is not the way to address them.**

Many players are already working on personal care attendant issues. These include the Connecticut Council for Persons with Disabilities (mandated by CGS Sec. 17b-606(b)) to oversee State PCA programs), Money Follows the Person, Connect-Ability, and Allied Community Resources to name only a few.

**Critical State councils are being slated for elimination.**

**The strongest supporter of this new Council is SEIU 1199, which means,  
"This year the Council. Next year the unionization of PCAs."  
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN!**